ANIMAL RIGHTS PRISONER SUPPORT

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Jonny Ablewhite

Gregg Avery

Natasha Avery

Mel Broughton

Gavin Medd-Hall

Heather Nicholson

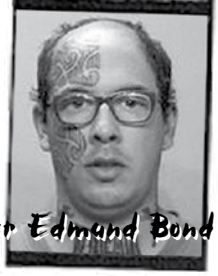
Gerrah Selby

Nicole Vosper

Dan Wadham

Kerry Whitburn

Sarah Whitehead


Walter Edmund Bond

Nathan Block

Alex Hall

Kevin Kjonaas

Adrian Magdaleno

Marie Jeanette Mason

Eric McDavid

Daniel McGowan

Kevin Olliff

Jonathan Paul

William James Viehl

Briana Waters

Joyanna Zacher

about ARPS

Animal Rights Prisoner Support (ARPS) is a voluntary group which supports those campaigners who, as a result of their efforts to prevent innocent animals being caged, abused and killed, are themselves jailed because of their selfless acts on behalf of those who cannot speak up for themselves.

We live in a world where profit and property are valued over life and compassion, where those who try to stop suffering are seen as criminals and terrorists because they threaten the economic system and the status quo. As long as this continues to be the case, it is vital we support those activists who make the ultimate sacrifice.

Once in prison they are often isolated, separated from family and friends and from other campaigners. This is a calculated part of the process of imprisonment, intended to be a punishment, and a deterrent to others. Yet these are good people who have acted out of compassion rather than for their own personal gain.

ARPS supports the prisoners in various ways. Our main aim is to break through this isolation and provide the prisoners with support, morally and practically, keeping them in touch with the outside world and enabling them to continue to be a valuable part of the movement.

As well as this newsletter, we have a website and social networking site where we publicise the plights of the prisoners, publish their prison addresses and encourage supporters and sympathisers from around the world to write them letters and cards, and let them know they are not forgotten. This is essential for the upkeep of the prisoners' morale and keeping them in touch with what is going on in the outside world.

We also publish letters, articles and news directly from the prisoners, in this newsletter and on the internet, providing the prisoners with a forum to share their news, thoughts, views and feelings with the rest of the compassionate community, and giving supporters and friends an invaluable insight into what life is like for animal rights prisoners.

We are in regular contact with the prisoners and friends, and endeavour to support them in various practical ways and look after their interests in whatever way we can.

Contents

About ARPS	**2**
Mel Broughton found guilty at re-trial	**3**
Writing to prisoners	**4**
Heather Nicholson's letter 06.07.10	**5**
Gerrah Selby's letter 28.07.10	**6**
"A shit and a shave" jail sentence by Robin Lane	**7**
Thoughts from Mel 23.03.10	**8-9**
Kerry Whitburn's letter 17.07.10	**9**
Interview with an ex-prisoner Jan Lawrence	**10-11**
UK prisoners	**11**
Natasha Avery's letter 01.08.10	**12**
Greek Animal Rescue/SAY appeal update	**13**
Jonny Ablewhite's letter 07.07.10	**14**
International prisoners	**15**
Adrian Magdaleno's letter 09.07.10	**16-17**
Walter Bond's letter 08.08.10	**17**
Gregg's letter 08.07.10	**18**
Sarah Whitehead's letter 12.07.10	**19**
Nicole Vosper's letter 19.07.10	**19**
Standing order form	**20**

What You Can Do

Write to the prisoners.

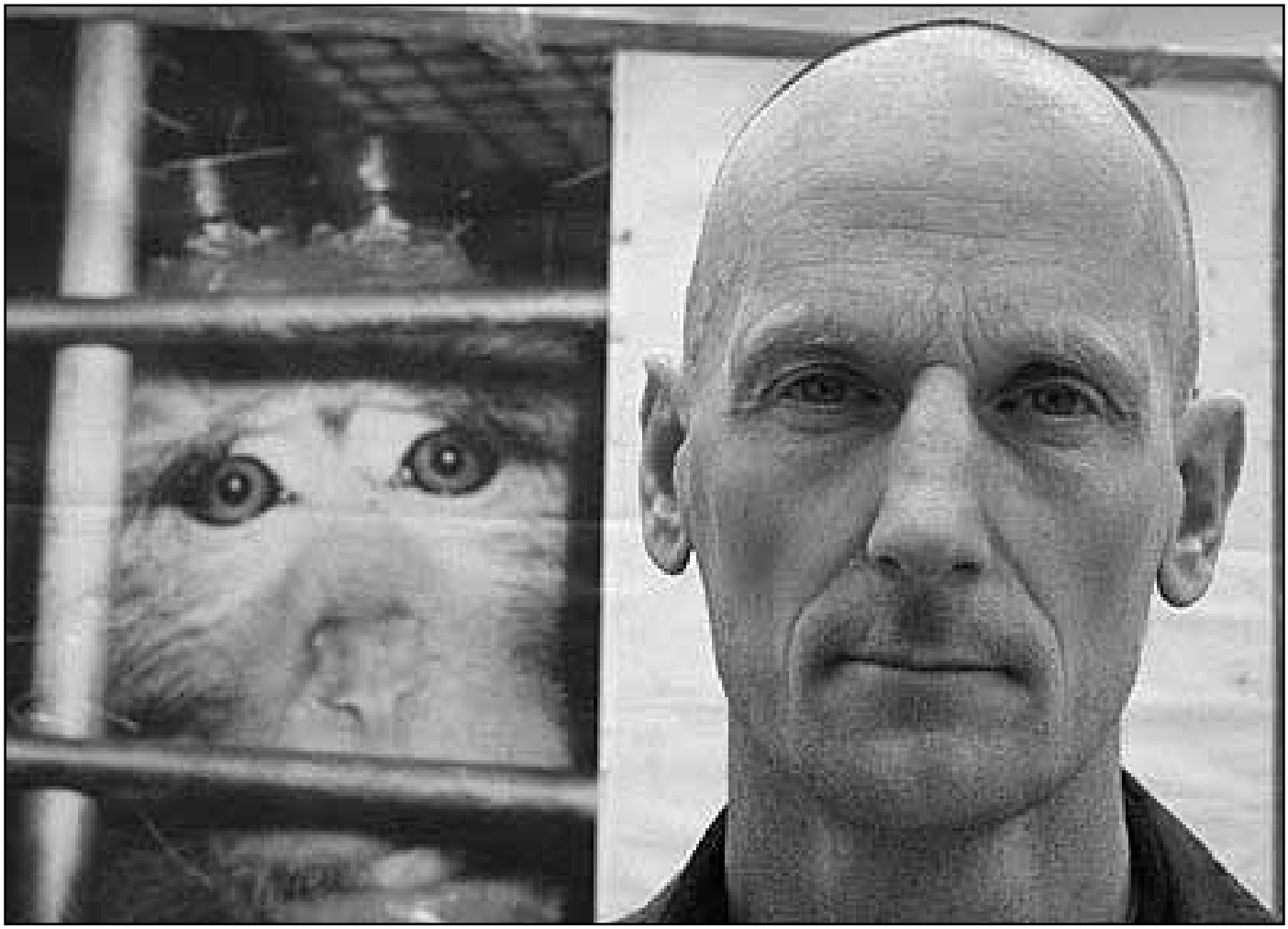
Subscribe to our quarterly newsletter. The newsletter contains letters, photos, articles and news from the prisoners. To receive your copy by post, send your name, address and cheque/PO for £10 (donation towards costs), payable to "ARPS" to the address below.

Subscribe to our email list. We will send out updates from time to time about new prisoners or important changes regarding the prisoners. Send us your email address if you want to be kept informed: info@arprisoners.org

Donate. In order to support the prisoners, we rely on support from other campaigners. ARPS is made up entirely of unpaid volunteers, all donations will be used to fund our important work on behalf of the prisoners. Cheques/POs, payable to "ARPS" can be sent to the address below. You can also pay regular donations by Standing Order, a form is on the back cover.

ARPS (Animal Rights Prisoner Support Group)
PO Box 2174 LEIGH-ON-SEA SS9 0AZ

Mel Broughton found guilty at re-trial



Despite having his conviction quashed by the Court of Appeal, Mel was re-convicted of conspiracy to commit arson in relation to the campaign against Oxford University's new animal laboratory on South Parks Road, after a second re-trial in July.

The Police claimed that two devices which failed to explode,contained Mel's DNA but an American DNA expert stated that the method used to extract the DNA from the devices was unreliable due to the lack of validation of Low Tandem DNA profiling, with the amount of DNA supposedly found so small it was 'unquantifiable'.

Rather than being convicted by actual evidence, Mel would appear to have been found guilty on the basis of his beliefs; as stated by Det Insp Kevin McGuire "...He [Mel] has been proven to be someone who believes direct action, in the form of planting explosives and setting fires, is acceptable." Indeed, much of Mel's trial was concerned with his beliefs rather than his actual actions, leading his supporters to conclude that the right to free speech does not apply to Animal Rights campaigners.

Despite the jury hearing evidence that in 2006 senior police officers were caught on tape saying they were going to 'wage a dirty war' against Mel and 'prosecute the shit' out of SPEAK campaigners, it would seem that members of the public (ie the jury) still don't understand the lengths that the police and state will go to in order to silence the AR movement and its most prolific campaigners.

Mel is currently in Bullingdon (Oxford), but may be moved to another prison.

Writing to Prisoners

Receiving letters from the outside helps to stop prisoners feeling isolated and other prisoners are always amazed at the amount of mail animal rights prisoners receive.

When you first start up correspondence with a prisoner, try not to ask specific questions, so prisoners dont feel under pressure to give a response. Please don't feel offended if you dont get a reply, or if a reply is a long time coming, as animal rights prisoners often receive large amounts of mail. They also frequently have ongoing legal matters to deal with, which can be a lengthy process. Consideration must be given to the fact that prisoners may not have time or that they may not feel like writing.

Keep letters positive and avoid angry rants. Talk about what is going on in your daily life or just send a bright card with a short note or a favourite quote. You can buy small packets of cards from many stationers and card shops which are really useful for keeping in touch with the prisoners.

Write to UK animal rights prisoners via email

Did you know that it is possible to write to many prisoners in the UK via the emailaprisoner service for just 25p per letter, cheaper, quicker and more convenient than conventional mail. Most UK prisons are either part of the scheme or are set to join in the near future.

You pay in advance and register with an email address and password. It works really well, usually prisoners get the letter the same day or the next day. They can't reply via email, but apparently this is in the pipeline, as well as the opportunity to send pictures.

It's a really great way to keep our comrades in touch with the outside world. For example, if you see some news online or in an email, you can just copy and paste it into an email and send it directly to the prisoner, with some news of your own perhaps. Or why not put a few stories and some news together, as you get 2,500 characters per email.

These prisoners can currently receive emails:

Dan Wadham (HMP Camp Hill)
Natasha Avery (HMP Send)
Nicole Vosper (HMP Bronzefield)
Kerry Whitburn (HMP Lowdham Grange)
Sarah Whitehead (HMP Bronzefield)
Heather Nicholson (HMP Foston Hall)
Mel Broughton (HMP Bullingdon)

Soon it should be possible to email all of them. On the website there is a list of prisons you can write to. Please ask them to introduce the scheme as well.

For more details see http://www.emailaprisoner.com

heather nicholson's letter 06.07.10

Dear Friends

As I write this, it's Tuesday night, which is canteen night, so I'm stuffing my face with Plamil chocolate and almonds as I watch 'Friends'. It's not a bad life, eh? Ha ha! Well you've got to make the most of every day, I believe. There's no use in being miserable and thinking "Oh I'll be happy when I'm out in November 2012." I'm trying to be happy right now and making each day as constructive as possible, too.

My studies are going really well and I have now started my Equine Psychology course, which I absolutely love! If any of you can help me out with any interesting or unusual stories of equine behaviour, I would be most grateful. I love the way this course from 'The Animal Care College' writes about horses, eg. "Traditionally, these inherited qualities are known as instincts. Looking at it from a different, less dry perspective, however, we might equally say that they are in fact a form of wisdom – wisdom that they still have and which is right at the core of their being. We really need to consider the horse's nature in this empathetic manner, rather than simply thinking of his ways as mere "instincts" that we can re-program. Horses are wise." Isn't that wonderful? It's heartening how attitudes change over time. About time too!

Talking of horses, I recently read my Great Grandfather's autobiography and this is what he wrote about the pit ponies he saw when he worked down the coal mines in South Wales:-

"After about ten minutes here's the horses being led into the pit mouth and sent on down, they walked past quite unconcerned and down into the dark and the hauliers following them shouting their horses' names now and again. I got to know them all by their names later and they were worth knowing too, they had more sense than a good many men I have met since …"

All of the animals I look after in the sanctuary are very well. My goats, Freckles and Star, now have their summer coats and are looking very sleek and shiny. Whenever they see me coming they start bleating like crazy and leaping about until I go over and give them a fuss. I absolutely adore them. I'm at my happiest when we're walking in the evening, and I sit in the field with both of them while they graze close by me and climb up the banks to eat the wild flowers. It's blissful and makes me so happy. There's a lot of nonsense noise and meaningless chatter that you are bombarded with in prison, and it's a stark contrast to sit quietly with these delightful, funny, affectionate, goaty friends of mine.

As always, my sincere thanks to all of you who write to me and keep me topped up with money and stamps. Every single one of you is amazing and I feel proud and privileged to know you. It's sad that such horrific animal cruelty brings us together but you all continue to make my

day, every day, and above all else, give me hope.

I continue to get a lot of support from officers and prisoners alike, as well as disbelief and outrage at this ludicrous sentence. People are still amazed at the amount of mail I receive! I continue to be well fed and well treated here and I'm on the way home to freedom, which is a great feeling.

I may be in prison but I wouldn't swap places with anyone else in the world. I am so glad I am who I am and feel the way I feel. I am a person overflowing with love and compassion and it's all directed to those most in need. As a prisoner I know I am in very good company, as throughout history many people have been there and fared worse for making a stand against injustice and suffering,and refusing to be intimidated and silenced. Those who fight and expose injustice frequently end up as a casualty of injustice.

Before I go, I'd also like to thank the wonderful Jo-Ann and her team at VPSG, everyone who writes, (and sends stamps, money, etc), all my visitors, my fabulous family, friends, ARPS, and my personal shoppers! Your care and love lifts me whenever I feel down. Thank you.

"In such a world of conflict, a world of victims and executioners, it is the job of thinking people not to be on the side of the executioners." Albert Camus (Quote courtesy of Debbie and Chris!)

Lots of Love
Heather xxx

Gerrah Selby's letter 28.07.10

Dear Friends,

I guess I should start by explaining why I've been "incommunicado" this whole time. There's no good reason, I've just always felt my words to be inadequate. Plus my legal team tried to convince me that if I wrote in magazines such as this, the judge could refuse my appeal and the prison could use it as an excuse not to grant me ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence). Well, my appeal was unsuccessful and surprise, surprise, the prison has still refused to grant me ROTL for reasons that they won't even disclose (I guess they can't think of any!). So it seems that old chestnut didn't work! It was worth a shot though because I've been craving for some vegan ice-cream!

But now, I've had enough of keeping silent and regret being stupid enough to ever believe that the government's prison service just might treat me the same as everyone else.

It appears that no matter what I do, the government and probation service will continue to label me an extremist and a threat to national security. As Natasha said, they really must believe that caring for animals is the worst crime possible. I'm sure they are trying to send us a message, although I don't understand what that message is because their dirty tactics only serve to make us stronger.

Everything here is great. I've kept busy while in prison at the gym, doing art and pottery and gaining a Btec qualification in Media Production. I feel like I'm in school! It's true that time really does fly by in prison. I cannot believe that I have served 18 months already!

I am being fed well thanks to the priceless hard work of the VPSG who are always on hand to help. Recently, I've been enjoying tofu stir-fries, chickpea curries, vegan cheese pizzas, garlic bread and even rice pudding!

My days are always fun and eventful but also busy, so it's quite nice to be locked in at night to relax, read and write letters. I have a lovely little en-suite "pad" with views out towards the lights of London. Of course, I long for my family, my friends and my freedom, but being in prison is no hardship. What those animals in Huntingdon Life Sciences go through is absolute hell and nothing can compare to that.

I am so proud to be a part of the animal rights movement and feel privileged to have met some of the most amazing, compassionate and ground breaking activists of our time. The sole reason we are in prison is because the British government sanctions a system which allows the murder & torture of millions of innocent animals in return for blood money, and because they see fit to protect a laboratory exposed for some of the most sickening and disturbing animal cruelty ever caught on film.

I still remember the first time I saw the undercover video footage shot inside HLS. I was about 17 and saw it online. I remember how the tears would not stop rolling down my eyes and I couldn't stop shaking. I was so distraught from seeing the absolute fear in those dogs' eyes and at the same time, I was so angry that the UK government not only wouldn't do anything to stop it, but they were actively fighting to keep HLS open. It was at that time that I made a promise to every single one of those animals suffering in silence that I will do everything in my power to help them.

Six years later, I am in a prison cell. Not quite the way I imagined my future would pan out but I have no regrets about protesting against Huntingdon Life Sciences. What they do is wicked and evil. There is a quote which says "For evil to triumph, all it needs is for good people to do nothing." Luckily for the animals, there will always be good people doing everything they can to help them. No matter what dirty tactics the police and governments use, we will never forget the animals who need our help.

I thank you all for everything you do! While we are imprisoned and unable to help, the greatest, warmest feeling is to know that there are good people out there aiding the animals in every way they can. Thank you to everyone sponsoring the SAY appeal and thank you to everyone who has the courage to stand up to oppression and tyranny. You are all heroes.

With love and solidarity,

Gerrah xx

"A shit and a shave" jail sentence

by Robin Lane

In June 1988, I was convicted for 'Conspiracy to incite others to commit criminal damage' at Cardiff Crown Court and sentenced to 18 months with nine months suspended. This followed a five week trial and the police had expected sentences ranging from 3 to 5 years.

HMP Cardiff is a Victorian prison which, at the time, was lacking in rudimentary sanitation in the cells, i.e. a bucket in the corner and slop out in the morning. In those days, vegan prisoners had to carry proof that they were in fact vegan. I was not carrying my Vegan Society membership card and had to wait a week for it to arrive. This was in the days prior to the VPSG and I had to make do with whatever vegan food I could get, which was none too healthy. When my card arrived, I was able to enjoy the benefits of vegan supplements including peanut butter, fruit, yeast extract and soya milk. After a while, a prisoner working in the kitchens supplied me with a fresh salad every day for which I was very grateful. Once I had established myself and began working in the tailors, I was able to supplement my diet further by exchanging food with other prisoners and obtaining fruit more easily, as well as buying biscuits, etc. in the prison shop.

My four and a half month sentence passed by fairly quickly and, as Ronnie Lee so succinctly put it, it was just time 'for a shit and a shave'.

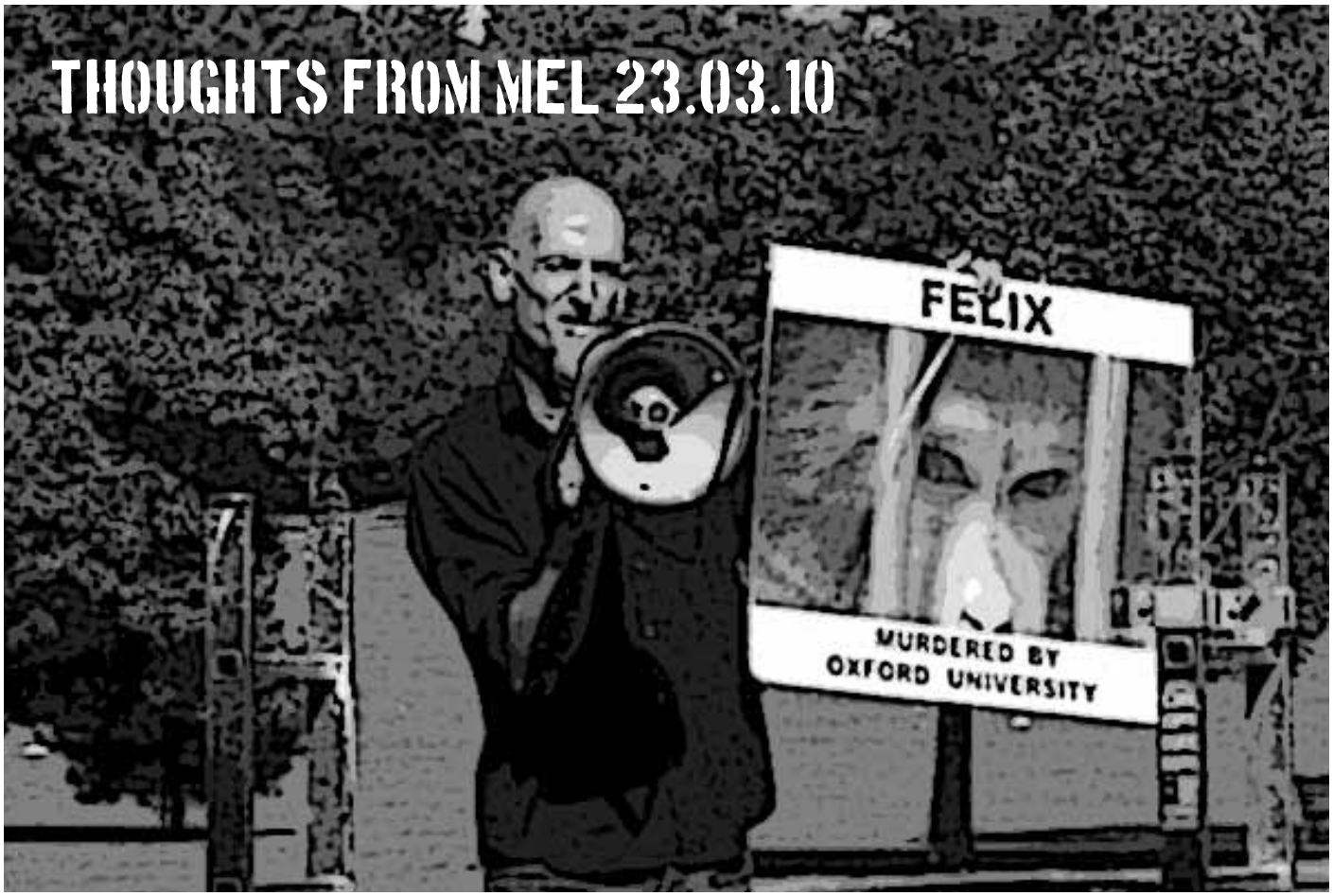
The two-year period involving the ALFSG leading up to my conviction has been largely overlooked by animal liberation archivists. When Ronnie Lee, then ALFSG Press Officer, was sent down for 10 years at the conspiracy trial in Sheffield, there was a need for a replacement, and in August 1986 I stepped into the void. After the Sheffield trial the ALFSG went through a resurgence, and with it's own printing press to hand, was able to produce thousands of fact sheets, a magazine 'Diary of Actions' (previously known as 'Action Reports'), leaflets and a wide range of merchandise. I even believed that the ALF may have been able to win the hearts and minds of the general public. Things were really looking up! However, the powers-that-be had other ideas, and set about closing down the SG (again). All this was taking place at the time of the incendiary device campaign against department stores selling fur. At first I was able to make TV and radio appearances, once appearing on the BBC World Service to a potential audience of 13 million listeners! However, the police/state were determined to put a stop to the ALF Press Office giving 'Oxygen to Publicity'. In my two years as Press Officer I was raided six times, spent a large amount of valuable time in police cells, was questioned for countless hours and intimidated by the Anti-Terrorist Squad. All this culminated in my arrest by South Wales police (after devices were allegedly placed in two department stores), and I was released with strict bail conditions. I had to surrender my passport, organise a £1000 surety, and sign on at a police station daily.

So much for freedom of speech!

In 1987, I founded a support group called 'Victims of Conscience (VOC)' to raise funds for expenses of defendants travelling to and from court. I also produced a typed sheet with information regarding forthcoming cases. Defendants were often unemployed and were expected to cover their own travel costs.

The support I received in prison was absolutely fantastic, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ALFSG, VPSG, and ARPS for the invaluable work they do on behalf of animal liberation prisoners.

THOUGHTS FROM MEL 23.03.10



I read several articles recently about the Swiss animal - rights lawyer, Antoine Goetschel, and amid the usual derogatory and sneering intellectualism of our so-called 'intelligent' press, was truth writ large. Goetschel is a public prosecutor who deals with cases involving animals. At the end of an article about him and his work as an animal rights lawyer he made the following observation: "You (UK) may have your famous RSPCA but the organisation has no real bite, it's all about people in nice uniforms," he said. " With a noble tradition like that, I am astonished that the UK does not have its own animal -rights lawyers already." – quite so!

It's not really any surprise when you consider the factional nature of the UK animal protection movement. With a plethora of groups, organisations, campaigns and charities all pertaining to speak for abused animals, how can you have a coherent movement? Talk of unity seems a bit pointless when those calling for it have failed to seriously consider what it is the movement is actually trying to achieve - and yet, is it so difficult to agree a formula of words that can represent the aims of the majority of campaigners? I would suggest that not only is it desirable, but probably essential if we are to achieve real change for animals. No social/political movement in history has attempted or achieved its goal without such a framework.

The historical works of philosophers and the increasing body of scientific evidence for sentience and emotion in non-humans has surely given us enough intellectual ammunition to create a binding declaration that can act as a focus for all those involved in animal protection.

I would argue that such a declaration must encompass some basic rights for animals, but the very mention of the words 'rights' and 'animal' in the same sentence seems to paralyse some animal advocates into a state of 'irrational' fear. I doubt it's because they can't envisage a perfectly rational framework for a broad based declaration that can help focus minds on the institutional exploitation of animals. It seems more pertinent to address the real reason why an agreement on such a focus is difficult to achieve. Is it that, in the face of a political, legal and media assault on the animal rights movement, too many are looking for an easier campaigning option? In some respects this is understandable. It can get very uncomfortable and unsettling to be on the receiving end of the type of politically motivated policing that many activists face as they pursue their completely legitimate campaigns. However, as difficult as the latest politically motivated 'clamp-down' has been (and it is without doubt the most serious and sustained to date), it should not be allowed to dictate or manipulate the perfectly rational and just goal for a significant change in the legal status of non-humans.

I don't want to get into a philosophical debate about animal rights v animal welfare. Such arguments have been, and are being made by those far more qualified than I am. However, it is more important now, than it has ever been before, to reach a consensus. Not one that demands we all suddenly have a big group hug and declare a universal sister and brotherhood, but a consensus that there are some fundamental principles on which we all agree. I would argue that any agreement must contain a commitment to recognise that some basic rights for animals is part of the language of all campaigners.

At this point it is worth commenting on the emergence of

pro-animal political parties. In my opinion they have acted at the wrong time and for the wrong reasons.

To simply act in reaction to something is seldom a good idea. It's difficult to escape the feeling that this is what the motivation for some pro-animal political initiatives have been – a reaction, not a strategic move to put animals in the political spotlight. I'm not saying there isn't a time and place for pro-animal political parties, there most definitely is. A better future for animals can only be lastingly achieved through political and legal acceptance, but we're still some way from that point and there is still much work to be done on the ground before we get there.

The grass roots animal-rights movement has achieved a great deal in raising the profile of animal abuse. The commitment and dogged determination of ordinary people who take the message to the public via demonstrations, stalls, pickets and educational talks has raised awareness where it otherwise would never have happened. In order for all this work to come together for lasting political and legal change there must be some shared aims across organisations and campaigns. As things stand, too many diverse campaigns are making it easier for the animal exploitation industries, and harder for the animals and the activists that campaign on their behalf.

A chapter in the story of the struggle for animal rights is closing and a new one is beginning. I would like to suggest that the next chapter begins with a clear sight of some agreed goals and that an agreed definition of those aims can give a focus to all campaigners.

The lessons of history are clear. All movements for social and political change must have the framework of some agreed principles and goals. Without them you run the serious risk of becoming irrelevant or a talking shop. Of course, for animal rights campaigners it's frustrating and disheartening, but for the animals it's a matter of life and death.

KERRY WHITBURN'S LETTER 17.07.10

Hello Everyone,

I hope all is well with you all, in life, love and happiness, and your days are as peaceful as nature would wish. I'm afraid my article may have a somewhat sombre air about it this time, but please bear with me. You see, I received sad news concerning a friend recently, and an illness she has been bravely battling. I will not divulge the details, as such information is unnecessary. Besides, many of you may know the person I mention.

It was quite a shock to me to discover not just the severity of her illness, but also that she had battled it – and won – before. Yes, such incredibly sad and shocking news, but also a regret that I have never actually met her! I hope and wish I DO have the pleasure of meeting her as I certainly DO feel I know her, and I TRULY DO class her as a friend.

Some of you may be wondering HOW I can claim to know her, and class her as a friend, when I have never met her. Well, the lady in question has been outstanding and faultless in her support of me – during this sentence AND previous ones – with wonderful letters full of kindness and care and warmth (PLUS the stamps, which are ALWAYS welcome!). Letters full of her exploits, displaying frustration and annoyance and humour. And even when I haven't replied to her letter for a while, she has still written to me to show she is 'thinking of me'. During her early battles with illness, her brilliant support STILL never faltered and her letters displayed absolutely NO evidence of her battle.

So THAT'S how I believe I know her, and WHY I feel I CAN class her as my friend. Even though SHE has NEVER met me, and I'm not the best at replying promptly to letters, she has ALWAYS been loyal and selfless. Too often in life – particularly in THIS prison – I witness misplaced respect and confused loyalty and misconceived admiration; generally influenced by fear or naivety or ignorance. But I AM SO BLESSED and SO LUCKY! I have friends – close friends or 'letter friends' – who understand the TRUE meaning of TRUE friendships. I urge ALL OF YOU - if you have friends whom you have not seen or spoken with for a while, then PLEASE contact them NOW! Life should contain as few regrets as possible!

TAKE CARE - ALL OF YOU – AND THANK YOU FOR ALL THE KIND SUPPORT I HAVE BEEN GIVEN.
LOVE AND HUGS
KERRY XXXX

interview with an ex-prisoner jan lawrence

How did you first become involved in animal rights & why?

I first got involved in the late 90's when I had never previously heard of HLS or Animal Rights. While out shopping in Kingston one day, I unwittingly passed a SHAC stall in the street and was given a leaflet exposing Natwest for financially supporting HLS. I was appalled by the whole scenario. As I banked with Natwest, I contacted them to express my displeasure with their ethical standards. I then started writing to national newspapers, MPs, and going on demos. The rest is history, as they say!

Most people are blithely unaware of the true horror of the vivisection and farming industries, or choose to turn a blind eye to the appalling and shameful abuse of animals to avoid accepting any personal responsibility or accountability, and to continue deluding themselves that it's all necessary and done humanely.

Has prison changed your outlook on activism?

My personal ethical and moral beliefs haven't changed one iota, nor will they. I believe that animals are pure, innocent, trusting beings who don't deserve to be abused by selfish humans whose sole motivation is profit. It was naive of me to think that I could change the world!

How long was your prison sentence & how was life in prison?

In 2005 I was convicted of 'public nuisance' and sentenced to 8 months in custody. Prison was easy - I went to a very strict Victorian-style boarding school from age 10 to 18, compared to which, prison was a 5 star hotel! I had a single room with en-suite facilities, 3 meals a day without me having to do any shopping, cooking or washing up, I had access to an excellent library and gym (sheer luxury - I'd never been to a gym before!). I spent my days watching television, reading and answering my huge daily postbag of supporters' mail, going to the gym and reading books - indulgences that I rarely had time for in my hectic life outside. I actually served 3 months inside and did a month on tagging. All in all, an experience money couldn't buy! I even overheard a group of girls plotting how they could wangle it to stay in longer!

Do you regret what you did?

Looking back on the whole episode, do I have any regrets? Well, obviously, I regret the way things turned out, not just for me, but also for the campaign as a whole, ultimately. It seems that protest is only lawful as long as it's not effective - as soon as it becomes effective, it is no longer lawful! I was inspired by the purest and most honourable of motives, we all were, to redress some of the injustices and cruelties of this world - how could that be wrong?

Jan, as many people know, your partner is currently in prison-would you mind telling us how this affects your daily life?

Yes, my partner Gavin is currently in prison (we're a right pair of jailbirds!) sentenced to 8 years for offences in connection with the Shac campaign. Gavin is registered blind and was a full-time carer to his disabled mother. Every day we hear in the news about murderers, paedophiles and robbers who get pitifully small, laughable sentences - in stark contrast to the draconian State sentences handed down to animal lovers.

Gavin has lost a lot of weight in prison -nearly 3 stones and his hair is very long - you wouldn't recognise him now! The benefit of a beer-free diet! He says the food in his prison is very good, so it must be the beer!! We get 4 visits a month (up to 1 ½ hours), speak every day on the phone and of course write letters to each other. We both miss walking down to the river, which is at the end of my road, to feed the ducks and walk along the towpath. We miss the simple things - a bottle of wine and my home-cooked dinners (very simple - I'm no great cook!) or a wander round Kingston, feeding the ducks there and then on to a meal with friends at the Riverside Vegetaria, a popular vegan restaurant.

The present situation is not ideal, but we try to make the best of it; we are both survivors.

UK PRISONERS

(Updated 14.08.2010)

Jonny Ablewhite (A5750AH)
HMP Hewell, Hewell Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 6QS
Jonny has been inside since September 2005 and is serving 12 years for conspiracy to blackmail the owners of Newchurch Guinea Pig Farm, which has now closed down.
Birthday: 27th January
What you can send: Self-addressed envelopes, cheques/postal orders made out to 'HM Prisons'. Please write Jonny's name/number and sender details on reverse.

Dan Amos **Released 30th July **

Gregg Avery (A4874AD)
HMP Coldingley, Shaftesbury Road, Bisley, Woking, Surrey GU24 9EX
Gregg was remanded in May 2007 and sentenced in January 2009 to 9 years for conspiracy to blackmail in connection with the SHAC campaign.
Birthday: 5th December
What you can send: Stamps (12 in letter), SAEs, cheques/postal orders made out to 'HMP Headquarters' with Gregg's name and number and sender's details on reverse.

Natasha Avery (A5180AD)
HMP Send, Ripley Road, Woking, Surrey GU23 7LJ
Natasha was remanded in May 2007 and sentenced in January 2009 to 9 years for conspiracy to blackmail in connection with the SHAC campaign.
Birthday: 28th December
What you can send: Cheques/postal orders made out to 'HM Prison Service' with Natasha's name/number and sender's details on reverse. Stamps & an SAE. Also stationery and blank cards.

Mel Broughton (A3892AE)
HMP Bullingdon, PO Box 50, Bicester, Oxon. OX25 1WD
On 13th July, at his re-trial, Mel was found guilty of conspiracy to commit arson. He is currently in Bullingdon prison, but may be moved. He has to serve the remainder of his 10 year sentenced, passed in February 2009.
Mel was remanded on 14 December 2007 and was sentenced on 13th February 2009 to 10 years for animal rights related offences against Oxford University animal lab.
Birthday: 5th July
What you can send: Cheques/postal orders made out to 'HMPS' with Mel's name/number and sender's details on reverse. Stamps, writing paper and envelopes.

Robert Griffiths **Released August **

Gavin Medd-Hall (A3624AD)
HMP Coldingley, Shaftesbury Road, Bisley, Woking, Surrey GU24 9EX
In January 2009 Gavin was sentenced to 8 years in relation to charges in connection with HLS campaigns.
Birthday: 20th March
What you can send: Stamps (12 in letter), SAEs, cheques/postal orders made out to 'HMP Headquarters' with Gavin's name and number and sender's details on reverse. (Please remember that Gavin has poor eyesight and will appreciate if you write in clear, large writing).

Heather Nicholson (A3158AJ)
HMP Foston Hall, Foston, Derby, Derbyshire DE65 5DN
Heather was remanded in May 2007 and sentenced in January 2009 to 11 years for conspiracy to blackmail in connection with the SHAC campaign.
Birthday: 30th January
What you can send: Cheques/postal orders made out to 'HMPS' with Heather's name/number and sender's details on the back. Stamps & an SAE. Also stationery and blank cards.

Lewis Pogson **Released 17th June**

Gerrah Selby (A2014AD)
HMP Downview, Sutton Lane, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5PD
In January 2009 Gerrah was sentenced to 4 years for offences in connection with the SHAC campaign.
Birthday: 26th February
What you can send: Cheques/postal orders made out to 'The Governor' with Gerrah's name/number and sender's details on reverse. Cash can also be sent, as well as stamps, writing paper, envelopes, paperbacks.
Support Page: www.myspace.com/supportgerrah

Nicole Vosper (VM9385)
HMP Bronzefield, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middlesex, TW15 3JZ
Nicole Vosper made a plea at Winchester Crown Court on 16/03/09 on charges relating to the SHAC campaign and was remanded in custody to await sentence.
Birthday 15th February
Support Page: www.myspace.com/vegannicole
What you can send: Cheques/postal orders made out to 'The Governor' with Nicole's name/number and sender's details on reverse. Books, stationery, stamps; an SAE.

Dan Wadham (A5705AA)
HMP Camp Hill, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5PB
In January 2009 Dan was sentenced to 5 years in relation to charges in connection with HLS campaigns.
Birthday: 3rd February
Support Page: www.justgiving.com/DanWadham
What you can send: Only cheques/postal orders can be sent in made out to 'HMPS' with Dan's name/number and sender's details on reverse.

Kerry Whitburn (TB4886)
HMP Lowdham Grange, Lowdham, Nottingham NG14 7DA
Kerry has been inside since September 2005, and is serving 12 years for conspiracy in connection with the Newchurch Guinea Pigs Campaign.
Birthday: 18th April
What you can send: Stamps, envelopes, writing paper; postal orders/cheques made out to 'HMP LOWDHAM GRANGE' with Kerry's name/number and sender's details on reverse.

Sarah Whitehead (VM7684)
HMP Bronzefield, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middx. TW15 3JZ
Sarah was sentenced on the 30th June 2008 to two years for removing a beagle from a garden where it was kept muzzled in a wooden cage and regularly beaten. She is also awaiting trial in relation to charges in connection with the SHAC campaign.
Birthday: 12th February
What you can send: Cheques/postal orders made out to 'The Governor' with Sarah's name/number and sender's details on reverse. Books, stationery, stamps; an SAE.

PLEASE SEND SAES WHEN YOU WRITE.

ALSO PLEASE DO NOT MENTION ANYTHING SENSITIVE OR ILLEGAL AS ALL MAIL WILL BE READ BY PRISON STAFF.

Natasha Avery's letter 01.08.10

Hi everybody,

Time is really flying and the longer I'm in jail the quicker it goes. I'm really busy and that's why it goes so fast I think. I've always found jail no big deal. I remember the first time I got remanded, Heather and I got carted off to some dump of a jail in Redditch of all places and I thought "Is this it?" Things are so often worse in your imagination than they are in real life, and the years that I spent at boarding school (before getting expelled!) were good preparation, even though the people here are somewhat different it has to be said!

Everyone is different though and there are lots of women in prison with mental health issues and all sorts of other problems who really struggle and the ambulance regularly calls to take women to hospital who have self-harmed very seriously or tried to take their own lives which is really sad. I try to look out for those people, it's amazing what a smile and a friendly chat can do and for me is part of what prison is all about, sticking together and getting through it.

We're still very busy in the gardens, it's non-stop as all you gardeners know and there's always masses to do. I go to the gym a lot and have been running often which I love - there's nothing like it for feeling good – well, not in here anyway! I read a lot and spend a lot of time writing to all of you which I love doing, and also to Gregg. We number all our letters to make sure that none get "lost" in the post and I'm on number 2809 – good going in just over 3 years – a record surely?!

The Governor here who is a friendly, approachable man and a breath of fresh air in a system where a lot of people have a permanent scowl on their face (not pretty), sorted out a visit for me with Gregg. It was just heaven to see him (Gregg, not the Governor) and he looked so fit and strong. My heart soared when he walked into the visits hall with a beaming smile on his face, I can still see it now. We are always together usually and I still haven't got used to us being apart. I never will and miss him constantly. He is my rock and my inspiration, the love of my life and so much else besides, but I'll spare you the Mills & Boon stuff and save it for him!

There is so much to laugh about in jail and we all do, often! For instance recently I wasn't allowed to have a clothing catalogue a friend had brought in and was told the reason was in case the pages had acid (LSD) soaked into the paper! The friend who brought it is in her sixties and works at a wildlife sanctuary so is a rather unlikely drugs pusher (unlike prison guards – one in four, according to a recent investigation, is involved in smuggling drugs into prisons, not that I'm casting aspersions on anyone who works here of course!) Can you imagine anything more unpleasant than taking hallucinogenic drugs in jail – definitely not my idea of fun! I also wasn't allowed to have disposable razors. We have to use the cheap Bic ones they dish out here, the ones that mean you stagger out of the showers slashed to bits and dripping in blood like a character in a low budget horror film!

I've been incredibly lucky to have found fellow prisoners throughout my sentence that I get on really well with and have a laugh with. I've got some great friends here, in for all sorts of crimes from fraud to armed robbery to murder. They are wonderful, funny, feisty women with loads going for them and we all look after each other and really do laugh all day long. The foibles and absurdities of the prison service really do have to be experienced to be believed!

A lot of you have asked what is happening about my ROTL (Release On Temporary Licence) and the answer is that your guess is as good as mine! Despite the offer of two excellent gardening jobs, I've still heard nothing at all from the prison about what the position is, despite being 9 months past my eligibility date now.

It comes as no surprise of course, but the blatant discrimination against animal rights prisoners on these issues throughout the prison service really does beggar belief and speaks volumes about what is going on behind the scenes. A lot of prisoners and even prison guards have commented on how unfair it is and their support is great. Yet again the vivisection industry says, "jump" and the powers that be say "how high".

As always the Vegan Prisoner Support Group and the ALFSG have been second to none in their help and support and our movement is immeasurably stronger because of these two long-standing organisations and the dedicated hardworking, professional people who make them what they are. They make a massive difference to prisoners so please support them if you can.

Of course prison isn't always a bed of roses and it would be misleading to suggest that it is. Our beloved dog Bonnie dying recently hit me like a sledgehammer – you forget the physical pain and effect of grief till it happens again don't you? I remember actually gasping for breath as if I'd been punched in the stomach when I read the letter telling me she'd died.

One of the things that has given me incredible strength and resilience throughout my time in jail is the superb support from all of you. I am constantly struck and moved by the warmth and love in your letters, the thought that goes into the things you send me and the effort you go to to come and see me. A dear friend in very poor health recently took a taxi all the way here and back from Sussex to visit me because she didn't want to let me down. As always actions really do speak louder than words – now where have I heard that before! All the notes and visits, cards and letters and everything you all do to make us feel cared for and supported make us invincible and that really is what prisoner support is all about. Don't ever underestimate how powerful it is, and how much it gets up the noses of the powers that be. They've arrested us, made sure we got totally disproportionate and excessive sentences and separated a lot of us into different jails across the country in a vain attempt to isolate us and break our spirits. Thanks to all of you they have failed completely and utterly.

A dear friend recently sent me this poem. It was Nelson Mandela's favourite poem when he was on Robben Island and I wanted to share it with all of you and with prisoners everywhere:

Invictus by William Ernest Henley

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll.
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

Love, respect and solidarity to everyone and to all my fellow prisoners. We'll all be free again one day and one thing's for sure, we'll have plenty of stories for the pub!
Natasha xxx

Greek Animal Rescue/SAY Appeal Update

Rebel, 8th July, the day he was found.

8th July, what a pitiful state!

Rebel, 6th August.

Since issue 3 of ARPS Newsletter went out in April, another £160 was raised for GAR through the SAY appeal, bringing the total raised so far to £4,450! Grateful thanks to everybody who has supported the SAY appeal and thus helped us to help a number of dogs in Greece by providing them with treatment and care until they are able to come into the UK. Pluto was one of the dogs sponsored with donations from SAY appeal after being found skeletal in April 2009, he is now a very energetic & happy dog, much loved by his adoptive family.

Another pointer was rescued early in July, coincidentally looking very much like Dale, but smaller in size. He was found on the Greek island of Lesbos, malnourished and infested with ticks, but this was the least of his problems. Some sub-human had tied a piece of wire around his hind right leg (just below the knee), plus poured battery acid on him - he has scars from the top of his head & down his back. Eventually the bottom part of the leg had rotted off, leaving him with an infected stump and this is how he was found. Once his 'story' and photos appeared on facebook, both Titch (one of GAR trustees) and I wrote to the person who put the appeal on facebook, offering to take responsibility for his care & secure his future. We were told that somebody on the island of Rhodes offered to adopt him, but if the home-check wasn't favourable we would be contacted.... and we were, a week or so later. We didn't realise that a vet on Lesbos had put a surgical (elasticated) bandage directly on to the infected wound. The pointer was named Tarzan by whoever took care of him on Lesbos, but after he arrived at Julie's in Halkidiki (who has a small shelter and is also taking care of Dale, featured in the last issue of ARPS), a much more suitable name was thought of ..... REBEL. It was either that or 'Rascal', because within 5 days of arriving at Julie's he became very cheeky & playful, like any normal puppy, except that he never had any 'puppyhood'.

When Julie and Dana (an English veterinary nurse who helps Julie as much as she can) carefully removed the bandage, they were shocked at how badly infected the leg was (considering it had supposedly been 'treated' by a vet on Lesbos!). They cleaned it as best as they could, applied healing ointment and put a non-stick dressing on it before bandaging the 'stump'. Sadly the leg couldn't be saved or his spine would become damaged as he tried to put weight on the 'stump', so Rebel's leg was amputated in early August.

Rebel will be prepared for homing in the UK and he already has a home waiting for him..... with the family who adopted Pluto!!

I don't know the full story of Orestis, but he was 'living' as a stray on the horrible industrial island of Salamina (it's hell for animals there!). I was told he's about 4 years old, but had sustained his injuries when he was about 2 after he was hit by a car. A few women on Salamina feed the strays and do what they can to help them (by sterilising them etc), but only the lucky few are re-homed, mostly in Germany.

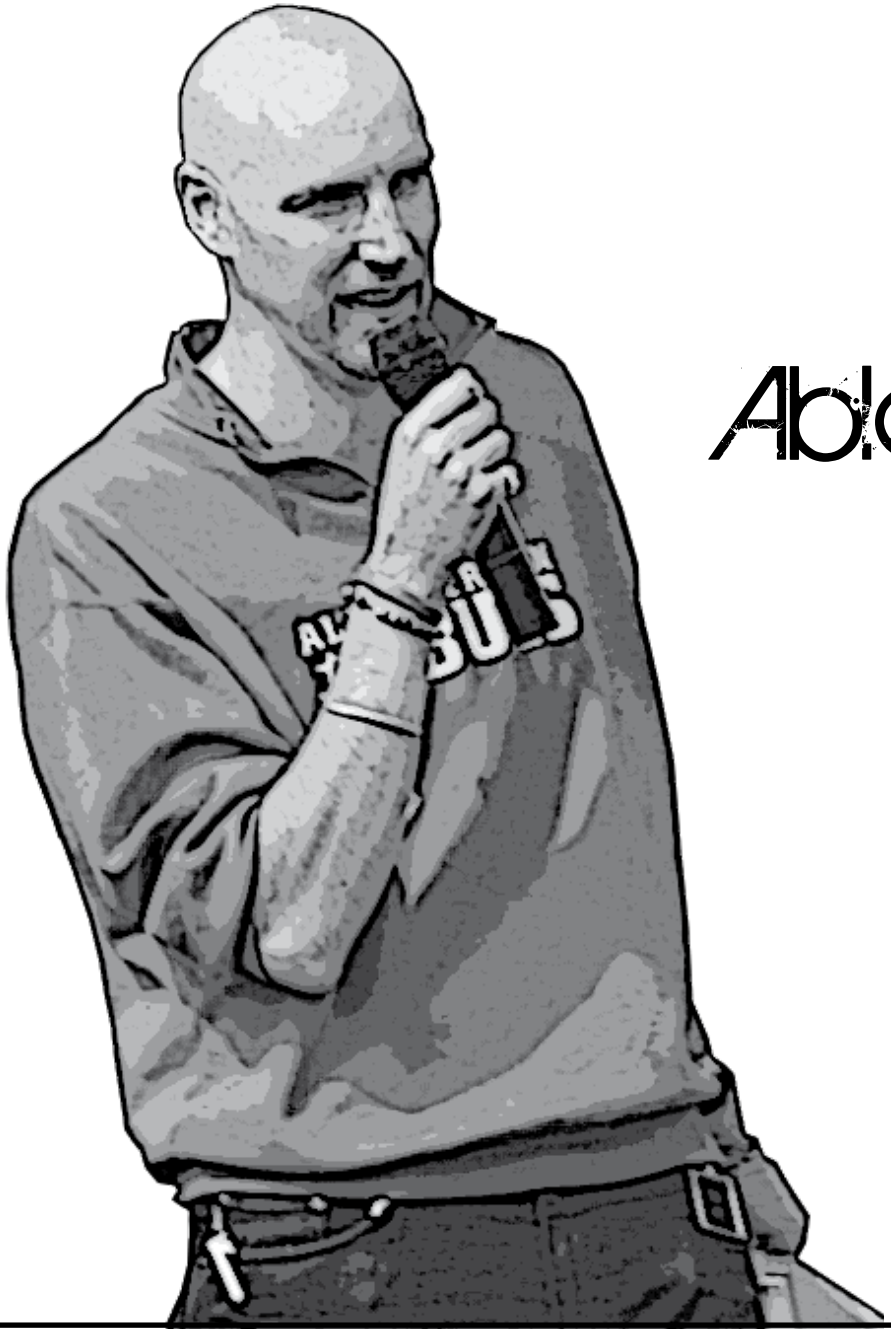
I first saw a photo of Orestis on Salamina website and I asked Myra to speak with Nadia on Salamina (she doesn't speak English) about him.... it pained me to see the way his right foreleg was bent. I told Myra we'd cover the cost of the surgery, which was carried out by a good (for Greece) orthopedic vet, who charged €800 for the op, but it was worth it, as the leg was saved (amputation would have cost €400).

Thank you to everyone who has supported us through the SAY appeal.

Orestis, July.

Orestis after the surgery.

Orestis, 6th August.



Jonny Ablewhite's letter

07.07.10

My dear Vegan Friends,

The VPSG continues to be of fundamental support in maintaining a consistently healthy prison diet. I'm not doing cartwheels over the daily flavours our "chefs" cook up in HMP Hewell, but, once a week, I do get a curry which is truly delicious. What it really needs is a side order of hummus and olives! I've been waiting for hummus and olives ever since leaving lavish Lowdham Grange and – finally – on this Saturday the 10th I'll be cramming as much of that illustrious combo into my orifice as is physically feasible.

Yes – I've finally been granted the first of the D cat treats: nine hours of complete freedom! After five freakin' years I can finally spend time with my family and friends outside any institutional confines! I can, simply, begin to taste liberty! (and hummus!) I'm getting surges of a sensation that I imagined had left me forever: excitement!

It's been an interminable and arduous wait and it will feel so blissfully cathartic! Both my sister and aunty will be there – they have been blighted with cancer over the last year and I'm understandably desperate to see them. In fact, I'm desperate to see all my friends on such emancipated terms and that will now be possible over the last fourteen months of this ignominious prison sentence. Book now and bring hummus!

My heart goes out to you all, to the VPSG and to all the indomitable AR and ER prisoners across the world.

Vegan love and liberation,
Jonny

INTERNATIONAL PRISONERS

Walter Bond #P01051760

PO Box 16700, Golden, CO 80402-16700, USA.
Walter has been charged with an arson at the Denver Sheepskin Factory, Colorado which caused $500,000 worth of damage. He is also under investigation for two other arsons; the Tandy Leather Factory and Tiburon a restaurant selling Foie Gras.

Nathan Block #36359-086

FCI Lompoc, 3600 Guard Road, Lompoc, CA 93436, USA.
Sentenced 7 years and 8 months.
Email support: solidaritywithsadieandexile@gmail.com
Birthday: 6th March

Alex Hall #15908-081

FCI Englewood Federal Correctional Institution, 9595 West Quincy Avenue, Littleton, CO 80123, USA.
On 30th June, 2010 Alex was setenced to 21 months in prison for his part in liberating over 600 mink from a fur farm.
If you would like to send donations or want more information, please email bjandalexsupport@gmail.com and visit theirsupport page: www.supportbjandalex.com and Myspace page: www.myspace.com/supportbjandalex
Birthday: May 5th

Kevin Kjonaas #93502-011

FCI Sandstone, P.O. Box 1000, Sandstone, MN 55072, USA.
Sentenced 6 years. (One of the US SHAC 7)
Birthday: 31st October

Adrian Magdaleno Gonzalez

Adrian Magdaleno Gonzalez, a university student of 21 years, has been sentenced to 7 years 11 months and five days (he was detained last February) at the Reclusorio Norte del Distrito Federal Prison.
The charges are threatening the social peace and damage to private property; he was linked to a bomb attempt at the Bank Banamex (sponsors of bullfighting) in September 2009 causing serious damage and also for a bomb on the subway construction in Mexico City, which is being built over wild habitat. The subway construction is destroying wild ecosystems.
Adrian's vegan diet leads to the exchange of food among prisoners.
For more information or to send letters of support, email us at libertadparaadrian@hushmail.me

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Marie Jeanette Mason #04672-061

FMC Carswell, Federal Medical Center, P.O. Box 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127, USA.
Marie was sentenced on 5th February 2009 to an outrageous 21 years and 10 months imprisonment for ELF/ALF actions.
www.freemarie.org and www.supportmarie-mason.org
Birthday: 26th January

Eric McDavid #16209-097

FCI Victorville, Medium II, Federal Correctional Institution, PO Box 5300, Adelanto, CA 92301, USA.
Eric was sentenced to just under 20 years imprisonment for conspiring to think about actions! (Part of an FBI sting operation)
www.supporteric.org
Birthday: 7th October

Daniel McGowan #63794-053

USP Marion, U.S. Penitentiary, P.O. Box 1000, Marion, IL 62959, USA.
Sentenced to seven years imprisonment for his part in two arsons and his role in an ELF/ALF conspiracy.
www.supportdaniel.org
Birthday: May

Kevin Olliff CDC ID# AE 1628

CIM - DU 206, Reception Center East / Del Norte, P.O. Box 500, Chino, CA 91708, USA
Kevin is on remand awaiting sentence. It is expected that Kevin will be on continual "lock-down" at Chino and unable to receive visits from friends and family. Additionally, he's lost access to his books, letters, and address book.
Birthday: 27th March
For more information or to send notes and letters of support, email us at support-kevinolliff@hotmail.com or visit his support website: www.supportkevin.org

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Jonathan Paul #07167-085

FCI Phoenix, Federal Correctional Institution, 37910 N 45th Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85086, USA.
Sentenced to 51 months imprisonment for his part in two arsons and his role in an ELF/ALF conspiracy.
www.supportjonathan.org
Birthday: 31st January

William James Viehl #15909-081

FCI Terminal Island, Po Box 3007, San Pedro, CA 90731, USA.
In February 2010, William was sentenced to two years in prison for his part in liberating over 600 mink from a fur farm. Despite a plea bargain whereby the prosecution asked for a six month sentence in return for a guilty plea, the judge decided this wasn't enough and sentenced William to two years imprisonment, stating there was no other word for people that liberate mink than 'terrorists'!
All mail must have your first and last name, be on clean white lined paper, in blue or black ink, and must contain nothing lewd. If you would like to send pictures please don't send any that are larger than 5" x 7".
If you would like to send donations or want more information, please email bjandalexsupport@gmail.com and visit their support page: www.supportbjandalex.com and Myspace page: www.myspace.com/supportbjandalex
Birthday: May 19th

Briana Waters #36432-086

FCI Danbury, Federal Correctional Institution, Route 37, Danbury, CT 06811, USA.
Briana is serving a six year sentence for allegedly acting as a look-out during an ELF arson. There was no evidence to support the case against Briana other than the words of two police informants who lied to the police to try and get a lighter sentence.
www.supportbriana.org

Joyanna Zacher #36360-086

FCI Dublin, Federal Correctional Institution, 5701 8th St – Camp Parks, Unit E, DUBLIN, CA 94568, USA.
Sentenced 7 years and 8 months.
Email support: solidaritywithsadieandexile@gmail.com
Birthday: 25th January

(Updated 14.08.2010)

ADRIAN MAGDALENO'S LETTER - JULY 2010

Greetings to supportive colleagues and those who clandestinely have joined the destruction of the Techno Industrial System. I would like to tell you how I ended up in prison, and my situation inside for almost five months. Today I am kidnapped by one of the gears of the machine, for attacking its peace, for threatening its stability, order and tranquillity; in spite of giving me this hell I will be their hell! Fires will grow every time that forest is exploited, every time the trees are felled in the name of progress and civilization. As long as they continue dominating animals and destroying the land, there will always be someone prepared to attack their machines, their cars, their alienating institutions and all dominating and destructive gear.

Progress continues growing, the proof of that is the construction of the new Federal District subway line, which will have a shopping centre, occupying their 'ecological reserves' to raise human, animal and land extermination centres such as factories, prisons, law enforcement agencies and shops that promote animal and earth exploitation. In this situation, anger and hate made me act against this means of transport.

The objective: sabotage, by placing an explosive device inside a wagon to cause economic damage, to break their security, because with their CCTV and other surveillance, I managed to infiltrate, to disestablish their peacefulness and progress, and in this way to stop them from building another subway line. My plan was to infiltrate inside the subway, and on arriving at the terminal to activate the device when the area was clear of people and safe to detonate.

I'm not a terrorist. I didn't want to harm anybody. My action was in favour of human, animal and earth liberation. I dressed like a normal person who doesn't present any hazard to the 'machine'. I went with the device in my hand, I can not deny that I was very nervous, my heartbeat and breathing were both very fast. I had just seconds to reach the terminal and activate the device. For a moment I decided to abandon the action and go home, but my anger told me that this couldn't be, so I returned with more courage. Once I arrived at the terminal I activated the device but an error made it explode sooner than I planned.

When people heard the explosion, they activated the emergency alarms, the doors were closed. People were pointing at me and I could not run away. I thought everything was lost and I would be in the hands of the police, and so it was. For my safety no one knew of this action, therefore nobody knew about my detention. At the Public Ministry agency I was interrogated for nearly 12 hours, the police as always pretended be on my side, although I always denied being involved in the action, they threatened to hurt my family. They tried to locate my home; I had given a false address.
Police said they couldn't find it and it was the time to provide them the right address. I wasn't allowed to phone anybody, and the interrogation continued as well as the threats. Finally they located my house. A policeman arrived and asked me if my house had certain features. I thought they would bring my family and would hit them in front of me to force me to confess and give information.

There was no exit and I accepted the facts. The questions and intimidation continued to gain information. There were more than 10 people questioning me. I do not

belong to any subversive group or anything like that. I planned and acted alone, so I didn't have the information they were after, and even if I had it I would have never given it to them.

Finally I went to a room to write my statement. There were two policemen present to register the statement, the public defender was not present and among insults and blows, I signed the statement, in which they exaggerated the facts and added things that I had never said. During three days of torture, I could not communicate with my family, I could not go to the bathroom, they did not feed me, they did not allow me to sleep, I received five visits from different people including the republic police court, who questioned me again; they insulted me and humiliated me. They took pictures of me as if I was a trophy for those bastards. After all this, I was sent to prison. A few days later they informed me that my house had been raided and they had sadly taken my computer among other items that linked me with the action.
Two months later I was sentenced to almost six years, but the Public Ministry were unhappy and they managed to increase my sentence.

I am now serving a sentence of 7 years 11 months and 5 days and all for not taking online security seriously, and although from your first action you run the risk of being arrested, it is worth getting rid of all evidence. I am now deprived of my freedom, from being with the people I love, and many other things. Although every damn minute in prison makes me think that I may not endure more time here, I don't regret what I did. They will not alienate me, they will not bend me.

Adrian Magdaleno Gonzalez

Walter Bond's letter 10.08.10

Thanks so much for your letter of support. While obviously I cannot talk about my case, the government of the United States will not scare me into submission nor will I be silenced.

I am facing some very serious charges and allegations at this time and if convicted, sentencing could be quite severe. Nevertheless, I am in good spirits. Having the privilege of being a United States prisoner, I still have it better than most 3rd World people do in their homelands. And nothing they do to me could even come close to the plight of animals.

For my part, I shall never relent in the fight for their total freedom. Any activist that is truly effective at resisting or disrupting these horrible blood trades may face persecution. There is no cause to despair in any of this. When you are trying to change the status quo, self-sacrifice is the price of admission.

In the end our cause will win. Either humanity will perish after having ruined the biosphere and our Mother Earth will heal and continue without us or those who profess to be Earth and animal warriors will prove it and change the current of world history, as so many social justice movements before us have done.

However, we will not win simply because we are right. Progress only occurs because of courage and confrontation.

I hope to hear from you soon. I can receive literature and media (news articles, etc), but only printed from the computer. No newspaper clippings, magazines, etc. Also, any monetary support would be much appreciated as well.

Regards,
Walter Bond

Gregg Avery's letter

08.07.10

Of all the photos on my wall the ones that make me smile the most are the ones of my dog Bonnie. In them all she is waiting to rush off, never looking at the camera, a dog always on a mission. You didn't own Bonnie, you were simply an associate of hers. Sadly, Bonnie passed away a few weeks ago, and I'm proud to have been an associate of hers for fourteen years.

When I think of her I don't feel sad, I think of all the places she's been - mountains, beaches and forests and the great life she had. She once ran off into the garden, and in the gloom ran straight into a bird table, knocking it flat down. She just picked herself up and shook herself and carried on running as if nothing had happened. I'm not talking about an Alsation here, but a little terrier. What incredible strength and spirit.

Whilst I think of Bonnie I also think of the dogs at Consort Kennels (now closed). 800 beagles bred to suffer and die. At 6 weeks old they would weed out any dogs that weren't cosmetically right. Did they rehome them? No, they would take them round the back of the unit, grab them by their back legs and smash their heads against the wall until they were dead. Then their tiny bodies were simply slung in a bin. All perfectly legal and of course cheap. Gone at 6 weeks old. Where was her chance to be on a mission in a forest or on a mountainside? Stolen from her at only 6 weeks old. And amongst all this murder, torture and mayhem I am the one who is condemned whilst those who take life so easily walk free. What a mad sick world.

Albert Einstein once said "Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile."

My rock over the past 3+ years is my darling wife Natasha. I saw her for 1 ½ hours 8 days ago, she looked amazing because she is amazing. We've always done everything together and this sentence is no exception, we've done it together every step of the way. How can I ever express just how much I love, worship and adore her? Needless to say our visit was brilliant, it was like we'd only been apart for 2 minutes.

Here are two numbers for you. I'm on letter number 2,747 to Natasha and I can run 3 miles in 17:49. By the time you read this, the letter number will have gone up, and hopefully the running time will have come down. All in all I'm in the shape of my life and very strong.

So when you hit problems in life, just think of Bonnie, pick yourself up, shake yourself down and carry on as if nothing has happened.

Lots of love
Gregg

Sarah Whitehead's letter 12.07.10

Hi everyone,

Nothing much changes in here – things get madder and more inconsistent by the day, and now we've been told to expect doubling up, two prisoners in a single cell, to try and "ease overcrowding". Not quite sure of the logic there, but it sounds very cosy! I've tried digging myself out, but there's not much point when you're on the first floor.

Thank you so much to everyone who continues to write so faithfully and for all your kind words about my animals. I miss them every single day. Visits from the wonderful friends caring for them are such a joy. To know how much my beautiful animals are loved and cared for is all I need.

My studies are going well. I keep branching off into philosophy and psychology and reading all sorts of wonderful books – 'The Philosopher and the Wolf',' Psychological Survival', 'Justice: What's the right thing to do?' and next is 'A Little History of the World'. The more I read and learn about the human race, the less I forgive! I think humans are obsessed with the pursuit of selfish happiness and animals live in the joy of now. It's up to us to ensure they get that chance.

Nicole and I continue to spend lots of time together. Someone said to us today "I'm never sure who is who – you are never apart". Does she mean like Ant and Dec, I wonder?! Anyway, I don't suppose Nicole gets much pleasure from being seemingly indistinguishable from a woman thirty years older than her, but that's life – ha ha.

As ever, I hate every second that is wasted in here when I could be out fighting for the animals, but every day is a step nearer to joining you all. In the meantime, if you are able to, please continue to support Tower Hill Stables, Folly Wildlife Rescue, New Life Parrot Rescue, and all the sanctuaries who have endless stress worrying about every penny, as they give refuge and love to abandoned creatures.

Thank you to everyone for all your kindness.
Lots of love,
Sarah xxx

NICOLE VOSPER'S LETTER 19.07.10

Dear Friends,

How's everyone doing? Life in Bronzefield seems to be going by faster and faster. It's such a joy to be working in the garden at this time of year; we have lots of cultivated plants flowering now, so lots of fresh greens to accompany the prison diet - bliss!

Sarah and I keep each other sane by laughing at this often mad place, I don't know what I would do without her! We have a regularly visiting Pagan chaplain now, so that's a real joy too: otherwise, everything is much the same, work, gym, post, and study.

I've had some wonderful visits this month and feel so loved and supported, for which I am so grateful - many women in here literally have no one and I wonder what prison life must feel like for them.

Recently I've been thinking a lot about those that are forgotten - The Animals. Who sheds a tear when they die? They have no one to honour them, no recognition of their sacredness or beauty; and all those Animals in Labs who end up being thrown into plastic bins, their bodies full of toxic chemicals, just thrown into an incinerator; and all those beautiful chickens, whose bones the girls in here so easily throw away. I think of their lives, wonder what their personalities were like, how they felt, what they desired. This, I think, is a key role of the AR/Earth lib. movements, to decommodify all animals, to honour them as non human individuals and, above all, to fight for them to be treated as persons, and with the respect they deserve.
So for all of you still able to act, please keep them in your hearts and keep going, and to everyone who has written or visited, thank you so much.

Love and Liberation
Nicole